

its continued efforts to provide clients and families with comfort and support but also in its Intergenerational Program, a program designed to involve children from various local schools in the area, in activities at the center. Considering this, it is no wonder that Governor M. Jodi Rell has called Orchard House "a jewel of the Connecticut shoreline."

I am confident that I speak for all the citizens of Connecticut in expressing pride and gratitude for the Orchard House Adult Day Center as it celebrates its 25th anniversary. The executive director, Thomas Russell Romano, and his staff have committed themselves to providing much needed care and treatment for the people of Connecticut.●

#### TRIBUTE TO BRIGADIER GENERAL BENJAMIN J. SPRAGGINS

● Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I wish to take this opportunity to recognize and say farewell to an outstanding Air Force officer, BG Benjamin J. Spraggins, upon his retirement from the Air Force after more than 34 years of service. Throughout his career, Brigadier General Spraggins has served with distinction, and it is my privilege to recognize his many accomplishments and commend him for his service to the Air Force, the Congress, and our grateful Nation.

Brigadier General Spraggins is a longtime resident of my home State and devoted public servant of Harrison County, MS. He enlisted in the U.S. Air Force on March 17, 1972. After over 6 years of successful enlisted service, reaching the grade of technical sergeant, Brigadier General Spraggins received his commission from the Academy of Military Science, McGhee Tyson, TN. Following graduation from Officer Candidate School, Brigadier General Spraggins completed aviation school at Mather Air Force Base, CA, and RF-4C training at Shaw, Air Force Base, SC. Brigadier General Spraggins was then stationed with the 187th Transport Ready Group at Dannelly Field, AL, flying the RF-4C fighter aircraft. While stationed in 187th, Brigadier General Spraggins served in many critical positions including instructor, scheduling officer and assistant chief of standards and evaluations. He was a weapon systems officer in the RF-4C from 1979-1983 and a weapons system instructor in the F-4D from 1983-1988 at the 187th Fighter Wing. Brigadier General Spraggins completed his military flying career with over 2,500 hours in the T-37, T-43, RF-4C, and F-4D aircraft.

On September 23, 1987, Brigadier General Spraggins was assigned to the Combat Readiness Training Center, Gulfport, MS. During his tenure at the training center, he served in various positions including range control officer, director of operations, operations group commander, and finally as commander of the Combat Readiness

Training Center. As commander, Brigadier General Spraggins was responsible for operations and training of over 20,000 military personnel annually and provided oversight for a \$75 million dollar budget.

Concurrently, Brigadier General Spraggins was sent to Andrews Air Force Base, DC, in 2002 to run the Crisis Action Team for the Air National Guard. In 2003, he also served as the interim commander of the 186th Air Refueling Wing where he was responsible for operations of KC-135 aircraft wing, with over 1,000 personnel and oversight of a \$48 million dollar annual budget. He was the first member of the Mississippi Air National Guard to simultaneously command two major units, the Combat Readiness Training Center and the 186th Air Refueling Wing.

Brigadier General Spraggins was assigned to the Tennessee Air National Guard in November 2005 as the chief of staff. In this capacity he was responsible to the adjutant general for readiness of Tennessee's three flying wings and three mission support units. In addition to duties as chief of staff, Brigadier General Spraggins also served as the air deputy commander, joint forces Headquarters, Tennessee National Guard. Brigadier General Spraggins was also attached as the battle commander for Air Force North, Tyndall AFB, FL. In this capacity he was responsible for ensuring the air sovereignty and air defense of the continental United States.

During his long and distinguished career, Brigadier General Spraggins successfully completed Squadron Officer School, Air Command and Staff, and the Air War College with the Air University. His decorations and awards include Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, Mississippi Magnolia Cross, Tennessee Meritorious Service Medal, Combat Readiness Medal, Air Reserve Forces Meritorious Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Air Force Longevity Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal and the Air Force Training Ribbon.

Upon the retirement of Brigadier General Spraggins after 34 years of dedicated service, I offer my congratulations to him and his wife Judy. Brigadier General Spraggins is a credit to both the Air Force and the United States of America. I know that I speak for all my colleagues in expressing heartfelt appreciation to him. I wish Brigadier General Spraggins blue skies and safe landings and congratulate him on completion of an outstanding and successful career.●

#### TRIBUTE TO BRIGADIER GENERAL DAVID K. (BOB) EDMONDS

● Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize an outstanding officer upon his retirement from the U.S. Air Force. Brigadier General David K. "Bob" Edmonds will retire on February 1, 2007, after almost 28 years of

service. His successes and accomplishments have been significant and many. He has been recognized by his superiors and subordinates alike for his ability to motivate and lead teams and mentor future leaders. Today, it is my pleasure to recognize some of General Edmonds' many accomplishments and commend his service to the Air Force, the Congress, and our grateful Nation.

Brigadier General Edmonds was born and raised in Charlotte, NC. He graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1979 as a distinguished graduate and the top cadet in the civil engineering major. He was selected for a Guggenheim Fellowship at Columbia University and graduated in May 1980 with a master of science degree in civil engineering. He began his Active Duty career at Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi, where he completed undergraduate pilot training as a distinguished graduate and was selected to fly the F-15 Eagle. He has served in numerous flying positions throughout his career, both as an instructor pilot and a commander, and led 45 combat missions with the 53rd Tactical Fighter Squadron during Operation Desert Storm. He is a command pilot with over 2500 flight hours and 300 combat hours.

General Edmonds' last assignment was deputy director for operations, National Military Command Center, the Joint Staff, Pentagon, where he led a team that performed initial analysis of developing military and political situations worldwide for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense, and President of the United States. He also performed nuclear watch in conjunction with the North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Strategic Command and was ready to advise the President on available courses of action and transmit the President's nuclear decisions.

We especially remember General Edmonds' his service to the Congress as the Deputy Director for Air Force Legislative Liaison from 2003 to 2004 and as the Chief of Air Force Senate Liaison from 2001 to 2003. During these tours of duty, he was responsible for articulating Air Force priorities and programs to members and their staffs and responding to congressional inquiries regarding a broad range of issues.

From 1999 to 2001, General Edmonds was the 16th commander of the 131st Fighter Wing, St. Louis, MO, where he uniquely served as an Active Duty officer commanding an Air National Guard Wing. He had great success leading the Wing to achieve and maintain air superiority with the F-15 Eagle aircraft and, accordingly, was awarded the 2001 Executive of the Year for the St. Louis metropolitan region. Prior to assuming this command, he was the chief, Joint Requirements Division in the Directorate of Force Structure, Resources, and Assessments, J-8, Joint Staff, at the Pentagon. In June 1997, he graduated from the National War College as a Distinguished Graduate. From 1995 to

1996, he was a White House Fellow assigned as a Special Assistant to Philip Lader, a member of President Clinton's Cabinet, and the Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

In 1994, he served as commander of the 95th Fighter Squadron, Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida, where he commanded over 300 personnel and supervised the operation of 26 F-15 aircraft. Under his leadership, the squadron was recognized as the 325th Fighter Wing Squadron of the Year. Previously, he served in the Air Force Headquarters, with the Air Staff Training Program, and was an air officer commander, civil engineering instructor, motorglider instructor pilot, and women's rugby coach at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

On the eve of General Edmonds' retirement, I offer my congratulations to him, his wife Ann, his son Gregory, who is a freshman at the Air Force Academy, and daughter Katelyn. General Edmonds will be missed, and I know that I speak for all my colleagues in expressing my heartfelt appreciation to him. He is a credit to both the Air Force and the United States of America. We wish our friend the best of luck in his future endeavors and congratulate him on completion of an outstanding and successful active-duty career.●

#### TRIBUTE TO CAROL HAGEL

● Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, today I wish to celebrate the important leadership of Carol Hagel upon her retirement from the Indiana Farm Bureau, Inc. Over the years, she has traveled tirelessly representing Indiana agriculture in her position as the second vice president and head of the Women's Division.

In 1985, the Indiana Farm Bureau and I conceived the idea of sponsoring a youth essay contest focusing on the importance of Indiana agriculture in their daily lives. Throughout the years, essay topics have focused on health and nutrition, global trade, and most recently, alternative energy consumption. The Indiana Farm Bureau Women's Division has generously given of its time to judge over 15,000 essays at the county, district, and State levels.

For the past several years, I have looked forward to visiting with Carol when she traveled to Washington, DC, with the State essay winners and their families.

Carol has been a true friend to Indiana agriculture, and I cherish our years of friendship. I hope that you will join me as we honor and celebrate her many contributions to the State of Indiana.●

#### TRIBUTE TO DR. JENNIFER RICHESON

● Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, today I wish to acknowledge an extraordinary constituent of mine, Dr. Jennifer Richeson. An associate professor at Northwestern University, Jennifer has

recently been named a MacArthur Fellow.

Each year, the MacArthur Fellows Program typically accepts our Nation's most ingenious and diligent minds. The Program is highly selective; typically only 20 to 30 applicants are accepted. Moreover, although the fellowship grants a \$500,000 stipend, it is not meant to be a reward. Rather, it is an investment in the creative potential of our Nation. To activate this potential, the stipend is free of stipulations; scholars spend their grant on whatever projects they choose.

In 1994, Dr. Richeson received a bachelor's degree in psychology from Brown University. Then, in 2000, Jennifer received a doctorate in social psychology from Harvard University. Now, at Northwestern, she has used innovative research techniques to study the effects of racial stereotyping and discrimination on cognition and behavior. With the stipend she receives from her fellowship, Dr. Richeson will surely make further contributions to our society's understanding of psychological and racial issues.

I congratulate Dr. Richeson on her accomplishments. She is a model of academic excellence and commitment, and I am proud to be her Senator.●

#### HONORING LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN R. VINES

● Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, today I honor LTG John R. Vines, the commanding general of the XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg.

General Vines, an outstanding American soldier from Alabama, will soon retire after more than 35 years of selfless service to this great Nation in the U.S. Army. General Vines' dedication to our soldiers, commitment to excellence, and performance of duty has been extraordinary throughout his career. General Vines' lifetime of service culminated in an assignment as the commanding general of the XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg, which he has held since 2003.

During his time in uniform, General Vines served in a succession of command and staff positions worldwide. The embodiment of an Army Ranger, General Vines has served all over the world, commanding paratroopers in combat during three separate conflicts. As a battalion commander in the 82nd Airborne Division, General Vines led a combat parachute assault in Operation Just Cause in Panama in 1989 and then led the same soldiers in Operation Desert Shield as the first ground combat unit in the gulf.

Soon after the United States went to war in 2001, General Vines, as commanding general of the 82nd Airborne Division, led his forces into Afghanistan as head of Coalition Task Force 82 and then assumed control of Combined/Joint Task Force 180 in Bagram. From January 2005 until January 2006, General Vines served as the joint forces commander of Multi-National Corps

Iraq in Operation Iraqi Freedom, becoming the first general officer to command forces in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

LTG John Vines holds a B.S. degree in chemistry from the University of Alabama and an M.A. degree in National Security and Strategy from the Naval War College. His numerous awards and accolades include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal; Distinguished Service Medal; Defense Superior Service Medal, with Oak Leaf Cluster; Bronze Star Medal, with Oak Leaf Cluster; Legion of Merit, with Oak Leaf Cluster; Combat Infantryman Badge; Master Parachutist Badge, with Combat Star and the Ranger Tab.

During his distinguished Army career, General Vines earned a reputation as one of the Department of Defense's most forward-thinking and insightful leaders. Remembered by those who served under his command as both an extraordinary man and leader, General Vines wrote personal condolence letters to the families of each one of his soldiers killed in combat. General John Vines represents the epitome of what Army leaders, soldiers, and the country expect from our military officers. He is a sterling roll model for young soldiers. Well known as the "Soldiers' General," his commitment to the troops he led was unparalleled, even being quoted as saying that success in combat is not about military hardware or technology. "It boils down to the individual soldiers. It's about having people who have the commitment, the courage, the will, and the warrior values to confront the forces that threaten us. And only so long as we have those men and women who are able and willing to confront this will we be safe."

His service to the Nation has been exceptional, and General Vines is more than deserving of this recognition. His sacrifices are appreciated and important to the freedom we enjoy every day. I hope my colleagues will join me in thanking LTG John Vines for his commendable service to our Nation and the U.S. Army. I thank his wife Pamela and his sons, Joshua and Jacob, for their steadfast support while he fulfilled this essential duty to our country. I personally wish the Vines' family all the best as they celebrate General Vines' richly deserved retirement.●

#### TRIBUTE TO SOUTHERN OREGON REHABILITATION CENTER AND CLINICS

● Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, it is my sincere pleasure to congratulate the Southern Oregon Rehabilitation Center and Clinics on being awarded the 15th Annual Secretary Robert W. Carey Performance Excellence Award. On November 16, 2006, the SORCC was honored with the Carey Award, an award given by the Department of Veterans Affairs acknowledging those VA organizations which exhibit performance and organizational excellence.

Nearly 400,000 of our Nation's veterans reside in the State of Oregon.